iv) allotment of Fair Price Shops to Institutions and Groups;

v) sale of non-PDS items by FPS licensees, and

vi) revision of commission to FPS licensees.

The Government has been following up with the State/UT Governments for implementation of these measures.

Shortage of rice and wheat

201. SHRI P.R. RAJAN: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government intends to ban export of rice in the prevailing drought and flood situation to meet the country's food requirement;

(b) the expected deficit of rice and wheat production because of prevailing drought and flood situation; and

(c) how Government plans to meet the shortage of rice and wheat to ensure food security to the people?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) Yes, Sir. In view of the lower estimate of production of rice in kharif crop in 2009-10, it has been decided by the Government to continue the ban on export of non-basmati rice till further orders.

(b) As per first Advance Estimates of Department of Agriculture and Cooperation, production of kharif rice of 2009-10 is estimated at 69.45 million tonnes, against the estimated production of 84.58 million tonnes in kharif rice of 2008-09 (fourth Advance Estimates). Estimate of production of wheat crop of 2009-10 to be marketed in Rabi Marketing Season 2010-11 has not yet been made.

(c) Steps taken by the Government to maximize procurement of rice and wheat to ensure food security of the country are given in the Statement.

Statement

Steps taken by the Government to maximize procurement of Wheat and Rice:

Wheat

(i) Wheat export on private account has been banned from 9.2.2007 till further orders.

(ii) Import of wheat on private account at zero duty has been permitted till further orders.

(iii) The Central issue prices of wheat have not been increased since 1.7.2002 in order to lessen the burden of inflation on the poor.

(iv) The MSP for wheat was fixed at Rs.1000 per quintal for RMS 2008-09. As a result of this and other measures taken by Government, 226.89 lakh tonnes of wheat was purchased in RMS 2008-09, which has enhanced the availability of wheat. The MSP for wheat in RMS 2009-10 was fixed at Rs.1080 per quintal, which has contributed to procurement of 252.92 lakh tonnes of wheat.

Rice

(i) In KMS 2008-09, the MSP of Rs.850/- and Rs.880/- per quintal was fixed for Common and Grade 'A' varieties of paddy. The Government also allowed a bonus of Rs.50/- per quintal on both varieties of paddy during KMS 2008-09 to maximize the procurement. As a result of this, a record quantity of 336.04 lakh tonnes of rice was procured in KMS 2008-09, which has enhanced the availability of rice in the Central Pool. In KMS 2009-10, the MSP of Rs.950/- and Rs.980/- per quintal was fixed for Common and Grade 'A' varieties of paddy. The Government has also allowed a bonus of Rs.50/- per quintal on both varieties of paddy during KMS 2009-10 to maximize rice procurement for Central pool.

(ii) Export of non-basmati rice has been banned *w.e.f.* 1.4.2008. Export of Basmati Rice is allowed only at Minimum Export Price(MEP) of US$ 900 per MT.

(iii) Import of rice at zero duty has been permitted.

(iv) The Central Issue Prices of Rice have not been revised since 1.7.2002.

(v) To have an assessment of major rice purchases by private trade, a notification titled "Rice (Stock Declaration by Companies or Firms or individuals) Order 2009 has been issued under the Essential Commodities Act 1955 on 11.11.2009. The order provides that any Company or Firms or individual which purchases paddy (in terms of rice) or rice beyond 10,000 tonnes during Kharif Marketing Season 2009-10 (October-September) shall furnish a return to the Secretary, Department of Food of the State from where maximum quantity has been purchased. In case the purchase of paddy (in terms of rice) exceeds 25, 000 tonnes (throughout the country) the return in the prescribed proforma has to be submitted to Department of Food and Public Distribution of Central Government.

(vi) State Governments were requested to maximize the procurement of rice by opening sufficient number of procurement centres and by other necessary arrangements for the procurement of paddy and its milling. State Governments were also requested to enforce a minimum levy of 50%. Commission to societies and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) for KMS 2009-10 has been fixed at 2.5% of MSP to maximize procurement from small and marginal farmers.

Price rise of essential commodities

202. SHRI NAND KUMAR SAI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state: